

New details emerge on NRM caucus meeting

Resolution. Government Chief Whip Ruth Nankabirwa indicated that there was consensus between Mr Museveni and NRM MPs that government projects must not be delayed under any circumstances.

BY MONITOR REPORTER
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com



President Museveni

KAMPALA. A meeting between President Museveni and NRM MPs convened to chart a way forward over the controversial Constitution Amendment Bill agreed on three resolutions that the government hopes will ensure that government infrastructural projects are not hampered.

Mr Museveni and NRM MPs resolved that government projects must not be delayed, ordinary land owners in compensation disputes with the government should not be disenfranchised while a strict time frame must be adhered to in resolving land related disputes between the government and land owners.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Government Chief Whip Ruth Nankabirwa indicated that there was consensus between Mr Museveni and NRM MPs that government projects must not be delayed under any circumstances.

Mr Museveni has voiced his dissatisfaction with delays on the Kampala-Entebbe Expressway that was due to be completed in December 2016 but has since been deferred to May 2018 amid compensation wrangles.

Ms Nankabirwa explained that MPs rejected a clause that proposed that in cases of disputes between property owners and the government, money would be deposited in court and the government takes over ownership of the property under dispute.

Instead, MPs proposed that money would be deposited with property owners and not court.

"A minister had suggested that when there is a dispute between a land owner and the government, the government should deposit the [valued] money in court. But members suggested that the money should be deposited to people

because there are many ordinary people who may not even have money to go to court," Ms Nankabirwa said.

Clause 4 of the Bill proposes that where the owner of property or any person having any interest in or right over property objects to the compensation awarded, the government shall deposit with court the compensation awarded for the property.

"People should not be disenfranchised. Instead of paying money to the court, the money should go to the rightful person," Ms Nankabirwa said.

With this compensation deposited in court, the government would take possession of the property pending determination by the court of any dispute relating to the compensation.

In court disputes

In cases where compensation disputes are in court, Ms Nankabirwa said the meeting resolved that there should be a strict timeframe for such cases to be disposed of by courts, just like election petitions are handled under deadlines.

Ms Nankabirwa explained that the committee led by Vice President Edward Ssekandi will only examine whether the government should proceed with the proposed amendment to Article 26 or amend the 1934 Land Acquisition Act.

The proposal to amend the 1934 Land Acquisition Act and not Article 26 of the Constitution was proposed by some MPs during the Caucus meeting.

Mr Ssekandi's committee has two weeks to report back to the NRM Caucus.